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**Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office**

DRAFT-Northwest Oregon BLM Pass Business Plan



**Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office
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Business Plan for the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass

Introduction and Approval Process

This business plan was prepared pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation fee program policy and manual (Manual 2930 – Recreation Permits and Fees) and handbook (H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook) guidance for day-use sites charging a fee within the Northwest Oregon District.

This Business Plan proposes a new district-wide annual pass that would allow visits to recreation sites within the Northwest Oregon District where day-use, or “standard amenity” fees are charged for individual passenger vehicles that hold up to 9 people. Each pass would allow the pass holder and occupants of the vehicle unlimited entries to day-use sites within the Northwest Oregon District for a year from date of purchase.

This Business Plan provides a comparative market study of fees charged for similar passes in the Northwest. The BLM would implement the Northwest Oregon BLM Pass after approval by the BLM Deputy State Director, consultation with the BLM Resource Advisory Council, and public notification. Upon approval, sales of all other district specific annual passes will be discontinued and any annual pass not yet expired would be accepted until their expiration. Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area would not be part of the new Northwest Oregon BLM annual pass due to higher fees per vehicle and status as a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System.

A comparative analysis conducted in 2016 reviewed regional passes and their costs. Analysis showed that the fees would be in line with what other similar passes cost and the level of services provided (Table 1). Annual pass sales would begin in 2017 based on this market analysis, fee schedule approval and in some instances upon completion of standard amenity site development.

Fee Schedule and Definitions

The fee schedule comparison outlines the existing and proposed changes for standard amenity recreation fees at the sites listed below. The Northwest Oregon BLM Pass would allow a passenger vehicle to access these sites without having to pay the standard amenity fee.

Definitions of Standard Amenities follow the BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (H-2930-1 pages 2-11 and 2-12) for sites covered under this business plan:

- **Standard Amenities** fees cover outdoor recreation sites and services for a well-defined area or developed day-use recreation site that has all of the following amenities: (1) parking, (2) permanent toilet facility, (3) permanent trash receptacle, (4) interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk, (5) picnic tables, (6) security services, (7) convenient and effective fee collection (8) identification and informational signs.

Pass Name	Coverage Length	Cost
Northwest Oregon BLM Pass	12 months from date of purchase	\$30.00 or 12 hours of BLM volunteer service

Sites Covered By the Northwest Oregon BLM Day-Use Vehicle Pass	
Benton County	Alsea Falls Campground
	Alsea Falls Day-Use
	Fall Creek Trailhead
Clackamas County	Cedar Grove Campground
	Marmot Recreation Site
	Pine Creek Campground
	Sandy Ridge Trailhead
	Three Bears Campground
	Wildwood Recreation Site
Lane County	Shotgun Creek Recreation Site
Linn County	Old Miner's Meadow Campground
	Yellowbottom Campground
Marion County	Canyon Creek Recreation Site
	Elkhorn Valley Campground
	Fishermen's Bend Recreation Site
Tillamook County	Alder Glen Campground
	Dovre Campground
	Elk Flat OHV Trailhead
	Fan Creek Campground
Yamhill County	Grassy Flat OHV Trailhead
	Whipup OHV Trailhead

Contact Person for Business Plan

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Business Plan Approval

Recommended By:

Jeff McCusker, Salem District Supervisory Recreation Planner

Date

Approved By:

Kim Titus, Salem District Manager

Date

Concurrence By:

Oregon Deputy State Director for Resources, (Acting)

Date

Fee Site Description

The Northwest Oregon BLM Pass would cover BLM administered sites from the Columbia River Gorge to the southern Lane County boundary and from the crest of the Cascade Mountain range to the Oregon Coast. The recreation activities available at these sites vary widely; however, they all share a commonality of repeat visitation by local residents. The pass would be accepted at the above listed sites in place of the standard amenity fees. This would allow local residents regularly visit their favorite sites, while at the same time being encouraged to visit other Bureau of Land Management sites. The type of sites can be broken down into three categories: campgrounds, trailheads, and day-use sites.

Campgrounds are generally the most developed recreation sites. These facilities offer a wide range of day-use activities to provide a better experience for overnight guests and as a desirable location for day-use visitors. Day-use activities include hiking, picnicking, fishing, boating, swimming, wildlife viewing, play areas, and ball fields.

Day-use sites are located and designed to support day-use recreation purposes. Day-use activities offered at these sites include, swimming, hiking, picnicking, fishing, boat launches, wildlife viewing, play areas, ball fields, horseback riding and mountain biking. Day-use facilities provide the full range of standard amenities described above.

Trailheads include amenities such as parking, visitor information, restrooms, security, trash disposal and access to trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. The trailheads provide access to off road vehicles (OHV), mountain biking, hiking and equestrian trail systems.

Visitor Description

The newest BLM District, Northwest Oregon District, encompasses nearly 86% of Oregon's total population. The Northwest Oregon District covers a large area ranging from the highly developed and urbanized populations of the Portland-Metro area, to the rural logging communities of Alsea. The wide disparity in socio-economics, cultural values, and population density allows the BLM to serve visitors with significantly different backgrounds. The Northwest Oregon District received an estimated 750,000 outdoor recreation visitors in 2015. The District's unique role as the interface between urban development and forested areas provides for a high level of visitation.

Fees Site Enforcement and Waivers

Recreation Site fees are enforceable through the presence of onsite hosts that patrol the sites and a rotation of BLM employees that monitor the sites. Visitors would display the pass on their windshield, in a manner that allows it to be easily viewed; either hanging from their rearview mirror or static cling on inside of windshield. If problems arise, the host contacts law enforcement or BLM staff. Many County Law Enforcement Officers are contracted to patrol the areas and are available to assist.

School groups and educational organizations can arrange free vehicle access at any time of the year for educational activities by contacting the BLM and providing a curriculum of their planned educational activities (see Conditions for Recreation Use Fee Waivers). Other recreational events are under special recreation permits issued by the BLM.

Conditions for Recreation Use Permit Fee Waivers

Section 803(d) of the REA provides that standard amenity recreation fees shall not be charged for (shortened list): use of overlooks or scenic pullouts, any person engaged in the conduct of official Federal, State, Tribal, or local government business, special attention or extra services necessary to meet the needs of the disabled, any person under 16 years of age, outings conducted for noncommercial educational purposes by schools or bona fide academic institutions, and others. Waivers of fees both for purposes of traditional cultural importance and education may be obtained in writing by contacting the Northwest Oregon District Office.

Fee Discounts

Section 805(c) of the REA provides for the establishment of a site specific agency annual pass which provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity (day-use) fees for a year from date of purchase. This new Northwest Oregon BLM annual pass cover recreation sites that charge a day-use fee and would not replace existing annual passes accepted at day-use sites such as National Interagency Pass. No discount is allowed for group use sites, shelters, yurts or cabins, as they are expanded amenities. The BLM would honor existing Golden Passports and the National Interagency passes until they expire.

The BLM's Northwest Oregon District believes that community stewardship will be a key to maintaining current and future recreations sites and those volunteers that are maintaining the facilities should be reward for their effort and work. In an effort to encourage volunteer service and foster a sense of ownership, the BLM will honor those volunteering at least 12 hours within a calendar year with a free Northwest Oregon BLM Pass as allowed in the BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Manual 2930 (Section .06.A.1.c.).

Projected Development Costs

The BLM's Northwest Oregon District is committed to providing high quality outdoor recreation activities and developing recreation areas with destination appeal. To meet the goals the Northwest Oregon District will continue to improve, develop and maintain recreation facilities to address the public's demands. The Northwest Oregon District will do this by re-investing all recreation fees collected back into the recreation facilities and effectively managing the recreation budget.

Projected Fee Revenue

The conversion rate (ration of daily entrance pass holders to annual pass holders) at Wildwood, our largest day-use site is 0.75 percent based on looking at the past three years of sales. Using the same conversion rate and projecting it district wide to all of the newly proposed day-use sites

would result in 3,250 Northwest District Passes being sold. At the proposed fee of \$30 per pass projected annual revenues are \$97,500, however the option to perform 12 hours of volunteer service as a way to obtain an annual pass makes it difficult to accurately predict. We expect to see higher conversion rates by mountain bikers and OHV users, and a higher amount of annual passes being sold to these groups.

Operations and Maintenance Costs

To maintain all the day-use sites costs the BLM approximately \$105,000 each year to operate and conduct annual maintenance for sites and trails, consisting of contracts, staff salary, vehicles, supplies, and operations. Many of the day-use sites are within or near larger campgrounds; this significantly reduces the costs of operations for the day-use sites. With continual decreases or stagnation in annual recreation budgets, the fee collection program is necessary to continue operations, maintain, and enhance the site's high quality recreational opportunities for the public.

Approximately 10 percent of total operation costs go towards fee collection; these costs include staff administration, annual operations, and maintenance of fee collections equipment and printing receipts.

Proposed Use of Additional Fee Revenue

The BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook, H-2930-1 (Chapter 2, Section III.A.), states each BLM office is allocated 100 percent of the recreation fee receipts for use at the site of collection. At least 85 percent of these funds must be used directly for recreation facilities, services, and programs that impact visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety. The BLM may use no more than an average of 15 percent of total recreation revenues collected under REA for administration, overhead, and indirect costs related to the Recreation Fee Program (Chapter 2, III.B.).

The BLM Recreation Permit and Fees Manual, 2930 (Section .06.B.6), states recreation fee revenues will be retained for use at the recreation site where they are collected and will be used to provide benefits visible to and desired by visitors. The BLM's goal is to use 100 percent of the fee revenues at the site of collection providing they can be used efficiently and effectively. Revenues are to be used: first, at the site of collection; second, to establish new fee sites within the Field Office of collection; and third, in the state where fees are collected to offset existing and new fee site costs.

- Supplement the continued current level of annual maintenance needed.
- Improve site accessibility, trails, interpretation, and signing.
- Make facilities appealing and enjoyable to use.
- Develop additional recreation opportunities in the district.
- Reduce a backlog of deferred maintenance to site infrastructure such as trails, roads, footbridges, and buildings.

Financial Analysis of Existing Private and Public Passes

The BLM conducted a comparative market analysis of similar state, federal, and local annual recreation day-use passes (Table 1). Proposed fees reflect what comparable passes currently charge for similar visitor facilities, number of day-use sites, access, and services.

Regional passes fees ranged from \$25 (Forest Service Sno-park) to \$80 (America the Beautiful), with the majority of the passes having a fee of \$30 for a 12 month period. The America the Beautiful pass was removed from the final fee determination process due to the significant difference in total covered area versus the other passes. The averaging of fees after removing America the Beautiful resulted in a proposed fee of \$30 for a 12-month pass.

Stakeholders and Partnerships

The BLM strongly believes that in order to have a successful recreation program, community partners must be engaged. The BLM not only gains great volunteers, but also gains the essential community attachment to a place. A community that is attached to campground or trail system is more likely to promote these places and take pride in their stewardship. The community benefits from tourism dollars associated with these sites, the skills that the BLM staff teaches area youth, and the extra finances directly tied to the assistance agreements, all of which are empowering rural communities.

Public Communication and Marketing Plan

1. Public notice of the proposed fee changes will be posted onsite until implemented.
2. Press releases will appear in local newspapers informing the public of fee changes the Salem District BLM is planning.
3. Both the public notice and press release will contain contact information for public comments on the proposed fee changes.
4. Website information will to inform the public of the proposed fee changes.
5. Fee signs and paper materials will reflect proposed fee change.
6. Notice of Intent to Collect Fees will be published in a Federal Register Notice six months prior to fee collection at new fee sites.

The BLM monitors visitor use to detect changes in site utilization and document written and oral communication from the public. Business plan review occurs on a biennial schedule from the date of the last signature. Future adjustments to the Sandy River Basin's fee schedule will reflect public comment and program implementation needs.

Ways to Inform Public of Fee Expenditures

Fee expenditure information is collected on an annual basis and presented in the Federal Statistics document available online. Locally, each area will post fee expenditure information on site to inform the public where and on what services, maintenance, operations their fees are spent.

Table 1 Regional Analysis of Regional Passes BLM Northwest Oregon District

Pass	Fee	Pass Validity Months	Pass Description
Northwest Oregon BLM Pass (BLM Proposed)	Proposed Fee \$30.00 or 12 hours of BLM volunteer service	12	Would be Honored at all BLM Northwest Oregon District day-use fee sites Would not be used at Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area
America the Beautiful (All Federal Parks)	free, \$10, \$80 (depending on pass)	12 months to a lifetime (depending on pass)	Honored at all Federal Parks across the United States Includes Volunteer, Access, and Senior America the Beautiful Pass types
Northwest Forest Pass (USFS)	\$30.00	12	Honored at OR and WA USFS parks Does not cover “Sno-parks” or concessionaire fees
Oregon Sno-Park (USFS, OR)	\$25.00	6	Honored at Oregon “Sno-park” locations from Nov 1-April 30
Oregon State Park Annual Parking Permit (OR)	\$30.00	12	Honored at Oregon State Parks Does not cover “Sno-parks” locations
Oregon Pacific Coast Passport (USFS, NPS, BLM, OR)	\$35.00	12	Honored at all listed agency day-use areas along the Oregon Coast